Nova Scotia

REPORT

for the years
April 1, 1986 to
March 31, 1988

Human Rights Commission

90-03295/

To His Honour

The Honourable Lloyd R. Crouse, P.C.
Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia

May It Please Your Honour:

I have the honour to submit herewith the Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission for the years April 1, 1986 to March 31, 1988.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas J. McInnis
Minister in Charge of the
Administration of the
Human Rights Act

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Minister in Charge of the Administration
of the Human Rights Act
Province of Nova Scotia

Sir:

I have the honour to present to you the Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission for the years April 1, 1986 to March 31, 1988.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Pachai

Bridglal Pachai, Ph.D.
Acting Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination against any individual or class of individuals because of race, religion, creed, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, or physical or mental disability in the following areas: employment; accommodation; services and facilities; housing occupancy; sale of property; membership in employee organizations or professional, business, or trade associations; membership in volunteer organizations performing a public service. In addition, the Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the grounds of marital status or age. It also prohibits discrimination due to source of income in the area of rental housing.

The Commission promotes programs of public education and affirmative action in the field of human rights to forward the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

In August 1986, Dr. W. Andrew MacKay resigned from his position as Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission when he was appointed Provincial Ombudsman. On November 10, 1986, Dr. Donald E. Curren, CM, assumed the position of Chairperson of the Commission.

List of Commissioners

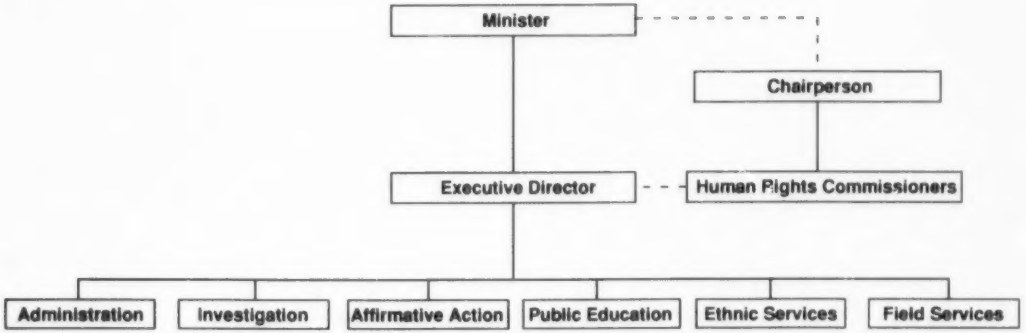
Chairperson	Dr. Donald E. Curren, CM, QC, LLD
Vice-Chairperson	Dr. Fred R. MacKinnon
Ex-Officio Member	Dr. P. Anthony Johnstone Executive Director

Members

Mr. George Davis, QC
Mr. Noel Doucette
Rev. Donald Fairfax
Mr. Michael W.Y. Ha
Mrs. Michaelena Hickman
Mr. Barkat Khokhar
Mr. Peter L. McCreath
Mr. Tom Rissesco
Mr. Calvin Ruck
Dr. Shiv Sharma
Mr. Aaron D. Solomon
Mr. Ernest Surette
Ms. Margaret Swan
Ms. Betty Thomas
Rev. Donald Thomas

Organizational Chart—Human Rights Commission

April 1, 1986–March 31, 1988



ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

The Administration Division provides all support services for the Commission. These activities relate to four functional areas: Administrative Services, Staff Services, Records Management, and Finance.

The Administrative Services Section ensures that the Commission develops a co-ordinated approach to all initiatives and activities that have implications for the entire Commission. These relate to office facility and space management, office automation, administrative support staff services for the Human Rights Board of Commissioners, implementation of policy and procedures relating to purchasing, courier services, supplies, and inventory control measures.

The Staff Services Section provides assistance in achieving the most effective and efficient use of Commission staff. Specific activities include the provision of comprehensive staff and personnel administration records, staff development initiatives, permanent, casual, and short-term employment opportunities, and a full range of personnel policy and procedure statements.

The Records Management Section ensures that records are handled in a planned system through a centralized records entry and retrieval system. This includes the care and custody of all documents and records, circulation control, and final disposition of records.

The Financial Services Section is responsible for all financial and accounting matters within the Commission, which include central office and three regional offices. For the Commission, the section's responsibilities for accounting systems include capital expenditures, Order-in-Council commitments, cost sharing, and cost accounting. The section operates an approval system for all capital operating expenditures and inputs payment data to the Department of Finance, which disburses the cheques to creditors.

INVESTIGATION DIVISION

FORMAL COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and facilities, property rights, voluntary public service, and advertising on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, sex, physical disability, or mental disability.

The Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of age (between 40 and 65 years of age) or marital status. Employment includes membership in employee unions, professional, business or trade associations, and volunteer agencies carrying out public functions.

The Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of source of income, where the would-be renter receives income maintenance payments from any level of government or under a court order or separation agreement.

The Act prohibits discrimination against a person because he or she has made a complaint or given evidence or assisted in any way in respect to a complaint.

The Act applies to any person — whether employer, employment agency, employer or employee organization, professional, business, or trade association, volunteer agency performing public functions, or property owner.

Any person who alleges discrimination must make the complaint on a prescribed form, available at any office of the Human Rights Commission. The complaint form is a simple statement of basic facts of the alleged act of discrimination. The Commission may also initiate an investigation where it has reasonable grounds for believing that a complaint exists.

The complaint is assigned to an officer for investigation. Human rights officers are professionals trained to conduct investigations in a fair,

impartial, and objective manner. Investigations are carried out consistent with the principles of natural justice.

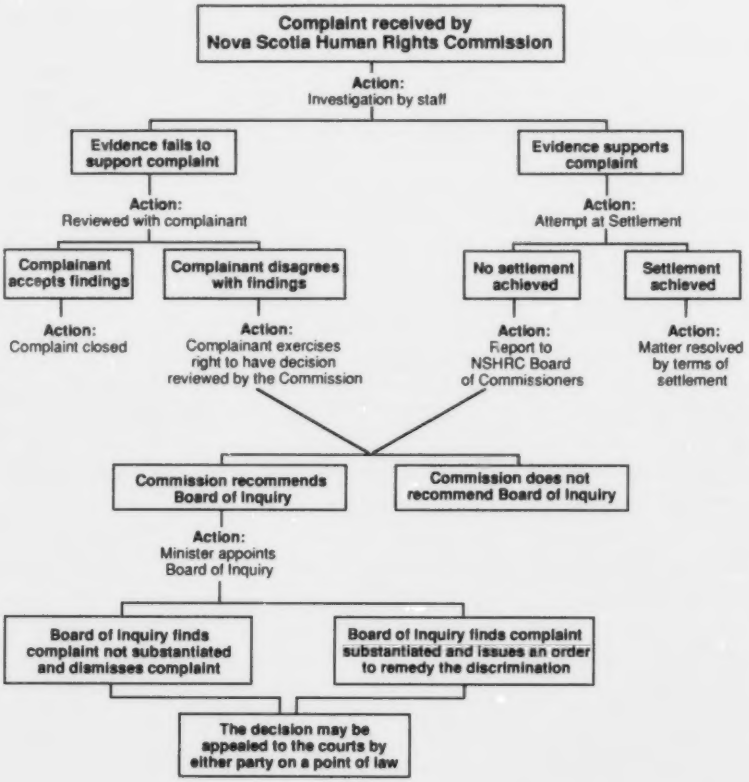
At the conclusion of the investigation, officers of the Commission attempt to conciliate the dispute and arrive at an amicable settlement acceptable to all parties. Experience has shown that it is possible to resolve the majority of complaints.

Should settlement fail, the Commission reports to the Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act, who may appoint a Board of Inquiry. The Board conducts a public hearing, and all parties have the opportunity to present evidence and to make representations. The Board may add, as parties, such persons as it considers necessary, but only after these persons have an opportunity to oppose the board's intention to add them as parties.

The Commission receives numerous intake calls on a daily basis. These inquiries are a combination of information, assistance, and referrals. Where matters discussed do not fall under the formal coverage of the Act, the Commission limits its participation to that of a helping role.

Informal Complaints

Regions	1986-87	1987-88
Central	1,433	1,662
Digby	368	360
Sydney	348	378
New Glasgow	298	271
Total	2,447	2,671


Complaint received by Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
Action: Investigation by staff
Evidence fails to support complaint
Evidence supports complaint
Action: Reviewed with complainant
Action: Attempt at Settlement
Complainant accepts findings
Complainant disagrees with findings
No settlement achieved
Settlement achieved
Action: Complaint closed
Action: Complainant exercises right to have decision reviewed by the Commission
Action: Report to NSHRC Board of Commissioners
Action: Matter resolved by terms of settlement
Commission recommends Board of Inquiry
Commission does not recommend Board of Inquiry
Action: Minister appoints Board of Inquiry
Board of Inquiry finds complaint not substantiated and dismisses complaint
Board of Inquiry finds complaint substantiated and issues an order to remedy the discrimination
The decision may be appealed to the courts by either party on a point of law

Formal Complaints by Ground

Ground	1986-87	1987-88
Race/Color	42	68
Ethnic Origin/National Origin	17	26
Creed/Religion	1	4
Sex	44	43
Age	18	19
Marital Status	0	4
Disability	24	38
Source of Income	2	4
Association	0	0
Total	148	206*

* The actual number of formal complaints is 196. The above figure reflects the fact that some complaints were lodged on more than one ground.

Results of Complaints

Results	1986-87	1987-88
Resolved	59	87
Withdrawn	42	67
Dismissed	2	10
Board of Inquiry	1	2
Continuing	44	30
Total	148	196

Areas of Complaints

Area	1986-1987	1987-1988
Employment	115	141
Housing	4	15
Services	28	40
Advertising	1	0
Total	148	196

SAMPLE CASES

Employment — Sexual Harassment

A woman employed at a school for approximately seven years alleged that she had been sexually harassed by the principal and that when she rejected his advances their working relationship changed to one of anger and hostility. She claimed he yelled at her, criticized her, and reduced her to tears until her health deteriorated and she had to seek medical help. She suffered tension headaches, allergic dermatitis, and developed a sinus infection — all attributed to workplace stress, which took its toll until there was no alternative but to resign.

The principal admitted that the complainant told him she did not want to be around him. He could see their friendship ending. He denied the allegations of sexual harassment.

Further evidence gathered by the Human Rights Commission indicated that as a result of the complainant's rejection of the principal's sexual advances, the principal became angry and retaliated against the complainant and proceeded to punish her.

In an effort to avoid emotional upset and expense on all sides, the principal and the school offered the following terms of settlement:

1. An ex-gratia payment by the school to the woman in the amount of $9,000, such payment being made and accepted without any admission of liability or wrongdoing on the part of either the school or the principal.
2. The execution by the school of a release in favor of the woman.
3. The execution by the woman of a release in favor of the school and the principal.
4. An acknowledgement by the school that it respects and will continue to respect the provisions of the Human Rights Act and a willingness on the part of the school to distribute publications of the Human Rights Commission to its staff and to offer them a seminar on human rights.

The terms were accepted by the complainant.

Employment — Disability

A young woman applied for a clerk position with the public sector. She was interviewed and offered the position.

On her first day of employment her supervisor (who had interviewed her) noticed that the young woman had limited use of her left arm and hand caused by a stroke several years before. The young woman was told that she would not be capable of performing the required duties and that she could not, therefore continue working.

The woman lodged a complaint alleging that she was discriminated against because of her disability. The complainant was able to provide the investigating officer with excellent references from employers who had hired her in similar positions in the past.

The supervisor was unable to show that the complainant was given a fair opportunity to prove that her disability did not preclude performance of the job. On the contrary, she had assumed that because of her disability she would not perform the duties required.

After investigation, the employer agreed to rehire the complainant in a similar position in another office within their organization.

Employment — Religion

A woman was hesitant to join the World Wide Church of God, of which her husband has been a member for some years, because she knew their strict rules of adherence concerning the Sabbath would interfere with her employment. After approaching the manager to see if a work arrangement could be made to accommodate her desired creed, she received a letter from the head office refusing to consider any adjustments in her work schedule. In order to join her desired religion, she must refrain from work from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

After contemplating her dilemma for some months, she approached the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission with her complaint. Shortly after returning to work, she noticed a much more sympathetic attitude towards her dilemma as a result of the Commission's communications with the establishment. Subsequently, a meeting was arranged with the personnel supervisor and an agreement was made to adjust the woman's work schedule to accommodate her Sabbath.

The complainant, who at first was very concerned about the possibility of reprimand when she came to our office, is now very happy with the results of her actions.

Services — Race and/or Color

While shopping, a black woman noticed that two store chains had a pattern of displaying black hair care products either behind the cash register or in enclosed glass cases. Other hair care products were displayed on the open shelves. The woman felt that this was done on the assumption that black people stole their hair care products, and filed a complaint with the Commission. Representatives of the store chains gave three reasons for the behind-the-counter display (not all stores cited each of the three reasons).

1. The product was a high theft item.
2. Customers asked a number of questions about the products, therefore, they had to be displayed near the cosmetician.
3. The product was a low volume seller and did not warrant being placed in the area reserved for the better seller.

A survey of various stores that displayed the product on the open shelf was conducted by the Commission. Twenty-two per cent of the stores reported a problem with theft, whereas 78 per cent reported the product line experienced no greater theft than the other cosmetics. In stores where the products were displayed on open shelves, fewer questions were asked by customers and sales were higher.

Both store chains have relocated the product line to the open shelf. This action was considered to be satisfactory to the complainant.

Nova Scotia Boards of Inquiry

Shane Paris v. *Caverley Light Trucking Company*
(Race and/or Color/Employment)
Decision rendered on April 30, 1986

Summary: The Board of Inquiry found that Shane Paris was discriminated against by Caverley's Light Trucking Company when he was dismissed from his casual employment as a laborer because of his race.

Shane Paris, a black male, was employed to do laboring jobs, such as

hedgecutting and painting. After a brief period of employment he was fired and was told that customers were complaining because of his race. The Board accepted Shane Paris' evidence.

The Board of Inquiry ordered Caverley's Light Trucking Company to pay Shane Paris compensation for six week's lost wages in the amount of $1,200.

Virginia Ann Myer v. *Eastern Optical Laboratories Ltd. and Mr. Russell Hartlen*
(Sex/Employment)
Decision rendered on July 30, 1986

Summary: The Board of Inquiry found that Ms. Virginia Myer had been discriminated against in the terms and conditions of her employment, between April 22, 1985 and June 21, 1985, because of her sex, by her former employer Eastern Optical Laboratories Limited and a former co-worker, Mr. Russell Hartlen.

The Board of Inquiry, in its decision, stated that the complaint had been settled by agreement among the parties. Under the terms of settlement the respondents had to pay $1,850 to the complainant, Ms. Virginia Myer; gives written assurance to the Human Rights Commission that all endeavors would be made to comply with the Human Rights Act; display the Human Rights scroll in a public place at the company premises; and disseminate to their employees the company policy of non-discrimination in the workplace.

Donna Ferguson v. *Cape Breton District School Board and The Town of Glace Bay*
(Employment/Sex and/or Marital Status)
Appeal Decision rendered on May 26, 1987

Summary: The Board of Inquiry decision, which dismissed the complaint of Donna Ferguson where she alleged that the Cape Breton District School Board discriminated against her because of her sex and marital status, was appealed.

The Board of Inquiry found that the Town of Glace Bay School Board (predecessor to the Cape Breton District School Board) discriminated against married women as a class when hiring teachers. However, the

Board found no specific circumstances in which Donna Ferguson was not appointed to a teaching position because of her sex and marital status, and declined to make any remedial order.

The appeal was brought by Donna Ferguson on the grounds that the Board's finding that there was no discrimination against her was perverse and unreasonable and that the Board placed an improper burden of proof on the complainant by requiring her to establish that she was more likely to be hired (but for her sex and marital status) than all other candidates for the positions between 1972 and 1976.

The Court found that the Board's finding that there was no discrimination against Donna Ferguson was not perverse in light of the evidence. The Court also ruled that there was no improper burden of proof placed on the complainant. The Board of Inquiry has discretion with respect to making orders for remedy and the Court declined to interfere.

The Appeal was dismissed without costs.

Cindy (Kent) MacKay v. *Ideal Computer Systems and/or Dr. Navin Mehta*
(Sexual Harassment/Employment)
Decision rendered on July 14, 1987

Summary: The Board of Inquiry found that Dr. Navin Mehta sexually harassed Cindy (Kent) MacKay while she was employed by him.

Dr. Mehta hired Cindy MacKay in July 1982 as a data program assistant to work on the development of computer software programs. During the course of her employment, Ms. MacKay testified that she was subjected to repeated sexual touching. In December 1982, she quit her job because she could not tolerate the harassment.

Dr. Mehta denied any sexual harassment. However, the Board of Inquiry preferred the evidence of MacKay and found that Dr. Mehta's conduct amounted to sexual harassment in violation of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

The Board of Inquiry found that the corporate respondent Ideal Computer Systems was not the employer of Ms. MacKay and was not liable for the violation. The Board ordered Dr. Mehta to pay Ms. MacKay $1,020 in compensation for lost wages and $362.88 in interest.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DIVISION

The Affirmative Action Division is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring affirmative action programs in the public and private sectors. It is responsible for organizing and acting on a resource/consulting basis to all human rights affirmative action community and employer committees throughout the province. It carries out liaison activities regarding affirmative action with racial, ethnic, religious, disabled persons', and women's organizations, as well as with individuals.

The Affirmative Action Division administers an affirmative action training program for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and assists with the placement of target group clients, including students, in employment and/or career-oriented programs in the public and private sectors; conducts interviews and gives advice and counselling to Affirmative Action clients; maintains contact and follow-up with employers; and develops a human resources inventory of clients seeking employment.

The division has the on-going responsibility of meeting with members of the private sector and initiating action and activities in the field of affirmative action.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action programs are remedies designed to eliminate systemic discrimination. Affirmative action was developed in the province of Nova Scotia through the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The purpose was, and is, to develop and clarify, in a concrete and positive way, what the public and private sectors can do to help remove discriminatory practices and habits.

Affirmative action is practised in the areas of employment, education, and housing. In previous years, many employers published or announced that they had a "no discrimination personnel policy", and employers were told not to discriminate. Today employees are becoming involved to a greater degree in affirmative action and employment equity programs.

Affirmative Action means more than non-discrimination. Non-discrimination requires simply that all discriminatory conditions, whether purposeful or inadvertent, be eliminated. All employment practices implemented by the employer, such as hiring, promoting, assigning, training, job structuring, pay and benefits, must be systematically examined to

make sure they are not implemented inadvertently or through supervisory discretion to the detriment of any person because of race, religion, religious creed, sex, age, ethnic or national origin, color, or physical or mental disability.

Affirmative Action in Nova Scotia is voluntary. It appeals to employers to make positive efforts to recruit, employ, train, and promote qualified target group members where it is clear that such members have been excluded from jobs in the past, even though no overt or traceable discriminatory action is or has been evident. If, as a matter of fact, target group members are not employed in numbers that reflect their availability, affirmative action means taking positive action to correct the imbalance.

As a means of accomplishing this, Affirmative Action Agreements are implemented in the public and private sectors. Each agreement/memorandum is unique because of different needs, situations, and requirements aimed at increasing representation of target-group people to ensure that employment equity is practised.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission recognizes that affirmative action does not only mean working with employers, but it also includes working with present and potential employees through:

- participating in employment-related workshops and seminars on affirmative action;
- keeping personal contact with target-group individuals who have expressed an interest in securing employment through the affirmative action programs;
- conducting and maintaining a human resources inventory of potential employees;
- developing and maintaining a working relationship with post-secondary institutions and vocational and technical schools;
- monitoring presently existing programs;
- meeting with top management and personnel in the public sector concerning new programs, as well as acting as a resource to correct existing practices and make recommendations for further progress;
- working closely with community groups who have an interest in affirmative action.

In the past two years some 350 placements were made as a direct result of affirmative action placements through the affirmative action programs.

Affirmative Action equals results. Affirmative Action programs are measured by results. Developing procedures, systems, analyses, reporting forms, policy statements, and action plans is meaningless unless the end product produces positive results, such as hiring, training, and promotion.

In order to ensure success, the basic components of an affirmative action agreement should be implemented. These components are:

1. Conduct a complete self-evaluation of employment opportunities.
2. Appoint a senior official with responsibility and authority to implement an affirmative action program.
3. Issue a written equal employment policy statement and affirmative action commitment.
4. Publicize the affirmative action program (internally and externally).
5. Identify barriers: develop and implement specific programs to achieve equal opportunities.
6. Develop goals and timetables.
7. Establish internal audits and a reporting system to monitor and evaluate progress in each aspect of the program.

Sample Affirmative Action Agreement

BETWEEN: THE TOWN OF

AND THE NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

RE: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS: It is standing policy for the Town of _____ to promote respect for the dignity and rights of all citizens, irrespective of race, religion, religious creed, color, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status or disability; and

WHEREAS: Provincial goals in Human Rights were established for action to combat racism and racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS: The Town administration should have a policy that is publicly and clearly stated to ensure that all hiring, training, upgrading and work assignments within the Civic Government and all of its departments or agencies are conducted without reference to race, religion, creed, color, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status or disability; and

WHEREAS: The Town, by example, wishes to encourage other municipal corporations within Nova Scotia to participate in similar employment programs to increase the opportunities for minorities, disabled persons and all persons and classes of persons without regard to race, religion, creed, color, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status or disability in the workplace;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Town of _____ affirm its commitment to an Affirmative Action Program in co-operation with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, in fostering programs which would increase the opportunities available to minorities, disabled persons, and all persons and classes of persons without regard to race, religion, creed, color, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status or disability.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That Council acting for the Town of _____ shall continue to provide leadership in the important area of Human Rights by initiating the following program for Affirmative Action.

Statement of Policy:

The Town of _____ recognizes that equal opportunity in the community can be fully achieved with a firm commitment to the concept of affirmative action. Accordingly, the Town of _____:

(a) Reaffirms its policy of no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, sex, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status or disability in the hiring of applicants or in the treatment of Town personnel.

(b) Will enact positive procedures to ensure that realistic hiring goals are established.

(c) Will periodically review the composition of the Town staff at all levels to determine if its goals are being met.

(d) Will attempt to establish representation of target group employees that reflects the composition of the general population.

Affirmative Action Statement:

The affirmative action plan is the written document through which management ensures that all persons have equal employment opportunities in recruitment, selection, appointment, promotion, transfer, benefits, compensation, lay-offs, and related managerial areas. The plan is specifically tailored to the employer's work force, available skills, and contains specific action with goals, timetables, responsibilities and resources to meet identified needs.

Goals in affirmative action planning present a solid commitment to equal employment opportunity and practice to all levels of the organization. They are management objectives, set realistically, and set because there is every intention to achieve them.

Program Procedure:

In order to ensure equal employment opportunities for minorities, women and the disabled, the program will consist of the following:

1. _____ Town Council will issue a written statement to all employees by way of manual or internal publication, announcing the Town's commitment to implementation of the affirmative action program.

2. _____ Town Council will direct those responsible for recruiting and training to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

3. The Town shall conduct an employee audit to determine the extent to which minorities, women and the disabled are represented in the various areas of employment in the Town.

4. _____ Town Council shall provide the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission with short and long term employment projections.

5. _____ Town Council shall participate in meetings co-ordinated by the Human Rights Commission, where necessary, with minority group organizations, to disseminate information about employment opportunities with a view to recruiting minority applicants.

6. _____ Town Council shall ensure that all employment advertisements will bear the slogan "Equal Opportunity Employer" and shall display the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Scroll in a conspicuous place at Town Hall.

7. The Town shall be positive toward the degree of visibility given to minority group employees through public contact positions, and publicity.

8. The Town of _____, in consultation with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, shall create a community committee to be known as the Human Rights Committee of _____, to consist of not more than 15 persons, to be appointed by the Mayor and Council, one of whom shall be designated as Chairperson. This Committee shall include representatives of religious, racial, ethnic, labor, management, professional and public groups.

9. Evaluation meetings shall be held at the commencement of each year to consider new plans of action and evaluate the previous year.

_____ _____

Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act

Mayor
Town of _____

DATED: _____

Affirmative Action Committees

St. Francis Xavier Affirmative Action Advisory Council
Acadia University Affirmative Action Advisory Council
Maritime Tel and Tel Affirmative Action Committee
Truro and District Affirmative Action Committee
Sydney Affirmative Action Committee
Antigonish Affirmative Action Committee
Glace Bay Affirmative Action Committee
Amherst Affirmative Action Committee
Yarmouth Affirmative Action Committee
Scott Maritime Affirmative Action Committee
New Glasgow Affirmative Action Committee

Highlights of Affirmative Action Committees' Activities

- Held awareness sessions for supervisory personnel, management, faculty, and members of staff.
- Held "gender discrimination and sexual harassment" workshops.
- Established and encouraged the establishment of resource areas for human rights materials at universities and public libraries.
- Published a Community Service Directory (Sydney).
- Participated in the Mid-Decade Symposium of Disabled Nova Scotians.
- Co-sponsored human rights conferences with educational institutions, such as Nova Scotia Teacher's College.
- Participated in "career fairs."
- Worked with local school boards and disabled persons groups regarding the concerns of disabled persons.
- Held information sessions for committee members concerning the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- Promoted and held functions to observe special events such as: Black History Month, International Human Rights Day, Martin Luther King Anniversary, International World Day of Peace, International Women's Day, and National Access Awareness Week.
- Held public forums to discuss equality in the workplace.
- Conducted studies and surveys regarding the impact of discriminatory societal practices and employment availability.
- Encouraged the signing of affirmative action agreements.
- Sponsored employment workshops to communicate employment needs, priorities, and aspirations of potential employees to employers in the public and private sector.

- Encouraged mall managers to hire special constables (security) to assist and give added protection for disabled persons.
- Sponsored a computer operator training program for target group individuals.

PUBLIC EDUCATION DIVISION

The Public Education Division is responsible for the development and implementation of public information and education programs in the area of human rights. It is one of the most important areas in which the Commission operates. Its main objectives are to promote awareness of human rights; to eliminate ignorance and prejudice; to effect positive attitudinal changes with regard to human rights issues; and to create a climate of respect for the dignity and rights of all people irrespective of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, age, and source of income.

The public information and education programs include school conferences, workshops, seminars, public speaking, ceremonies commemorating special days, dissemination of materials on human rights and related topics, displays, press releases, advertisements, television programs, liaison with community, ethnic, and minority groups, and organizations serving disabled persons, co-operation with government departments, and assisting students and the general public in research on human rights and related topics.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission recognizes the significance of the role of educators in formulating attitudes. Therefore, it promotes teacher education in the area of human rights. In February 1987, the representatives of the Commission participated in a conference on Teaching of Human Rights in Toronto, (a follow-up conference to one co-sponsored by the Commission in January 1986 in Halifax) and in a conference held at the Nova Scotia Teachers' College. In January 1988, the Commission also participated in an in-service workshop for selected teachers on the teaching of human rights.

The Public Education Officer was a member of the Project Advisory Committee of the Public Legal Education Society of Nova Scotia, which produced *Teaching Human Rights: A Case Book for Senior High Teachers.* The conference for teachers in 1987 included an officer of the Commission as a speaker on human rights.

The Joint Human Rights and Education Committee, co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education and the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission, meets twice annually. It recommends and/or examines materials relating to minorities, women, and disabled persons, as

brought forward by members of the committee drawn from the Commission, Department of Education, and various ethnocultural and advocacy groups.

In addition to press releases, advertising, and disseminating the Commission's publications, the Commission attempts to reach a wider public through television programs. With the assistance and co-operation of Halifax Cablevision, the Commission telecast a half-hour Law Day program in April 1986 and 1987. This program featured an interview with the Executive Director who spoke on human rights issues. A one-hour interview of the Executive Director was telecast through all the cablevision stations on or around Human Rights Day, December 10. Halifax Cablevision Station also telecast the entire Human Rights Day Ceremony in 1986 and 1987.

THE LIBRARY

The Commission library serves clients of all age groups who conduct research on human rights and related areas. The library collection includes publications on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, ethnic studies, women, and disabled persons; and an extensive news clippings file. It is a reference library only. The public is encouraged to use the library and to seek assistance if required during library hours, which are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

COMMISSION LITERATURE

The Public Education Division is responsible for the following publications:

Nova Scotia Human Rights Act
How the Human Rights Commission Serves People
Human Rights: A Guide for Employers
Human Rights: Policy Guidelines on Sexual Harassment
Guidelines for Investigating Complaints
Human Rights: Physical or Mental Disability
Human Rights: Source of Income
The Acadians in Nova Scotia
Les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Ecosse
Pictorial on Black History, Nova Scotia
Getting Your Foot in the Door

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

School Conferences

School conferences are effective means of involving teachers and students in activities that increase their understanding of human rights. There were eight school conferences from 1986 to 1988.

The conferences vary from one day to one week in duration, depending on the needs of the students and on the size of the student body. Before each conference, there is an orientation session for the teaching staff to make them aware of the goals of the conference as well as of the program. Also, they are requested to stimulate students' interests in human rights before the conference by engaging them in pre-conference activities. These activities include students' poster, essay or public-speaking contests and answering the pre-conference questionnaire on human rights. Some students, with the assistance of their teacher, rehearse plays, skits, and/or human rights songs to be presented at the opening session of the conference. If the conference is held in a high school, student representatives are involved in the planning of the conference.

If the conference is held in a school in the metro area, part of the student orientation involves a trip of selected students to the Commission office, where they are introduced to the officers who discuss human rights with them. Some of these students will be speakers on various human rights topics at the opening session. They are encouraged to use the reference materials in the Commission library, and to seek assistance from the Public Education Officer.

The actual conference usually includes an opening session, a closing session, and classroom sessions. The Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act, or his designate, often delivers the keynote address at the opening session. The classroom sessions are conducted by human rights officers with the assistance of resource persons from various community groups and organizations, e.g., Status of Women, CNIB, etc. Recommendations and suggestions at these sessions are recorded and presented at the closing session.

Materials provided to the schools include a conference agenda, pre-conference and post-conference questionnaires, and relevant human rights pamphlets.

List of School Conferences

1986	April	Weymouth Consolidated School, Weymouth
	April	Harold T. Barrett Junior High School, Lower Sackville
	October	Mary Lawson School, Dartmouth
1987	February	Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High School, Sydney
	May	Digby Regional High School, Digby
	October	Dartmouth Senior High School, Dartmouth
	November	Mi'Kmawey School, Bear Head
	November	Northbrook School, Dartmouth

Human Rights Day Ceremonies

Anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were celebrated on December 10 at Province House by special ceremonies. In 1986 and 1987 the United Nation's Decade of Disabled Persons was also recognized.

In 1986, to commemorate the 38th anniversary and to mark the passing of legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of mental disability (May 1986), the Premier presented awards to two persons for their outstanding services to mentally disabled people. The new Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Donald E. Curren, was formally introduced.

Awards were also presented to students of Mary Lawson School who won the human rights poster contest.

A special citizenship court formed a major part of the observance of Human Rights Day. From this day onward, Citizenship Court became part of the Human Rights Day Ceremony, where human rights kits are presented to all new Canadian citizens at all citizenship courts.

In 1987, the Premier honored seven individuals for their outstanding achievements and/or services to the disabled community. Awards were also presented to the poster contest winners of Northbrook School and an award of distinction was given to Digby Regional High School for its initiatives and efforts in a human rights conference held at that school.

In 1986 and 1987 the ceremonies were enhanced by presentations by students and the Cornwallis Street Children's Choir.

RESEARCH DIVISION

The Research Division* of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has continued to promote awareness of the diverse ethnic groups in Nova Scotia and has become more fully involved in promoting understanding of human rights issues and concerns.

Close contact has been ongoing with other organizations, individuals, groups, and provincial and federal government departments involved in issues relating to human rights so that the Commission continues to assist wherever possible in the human rights field.

Liaison has continued with groups committed to improving human rights in the areas of education, employment, housing and accommodations, and services provided to the general public. This liaison has sometimes taken the form of presenting lectures to groups or organizations, attending and participating in the deliberations of the groups and organizations on a monthly basis as well as attending receptions, workshops, and conferences.

Following is a breakdown, by year, of the activities and engagements in which this section of the Human Rights Commission has been involved:

Engagements	1986-1987	1987-1988
Speaking engagements	6	2
Lectures/conferences/workshops	6	2
Annual general meetings	4	1
Student human rights conferences	6	2
Liaison meetings	4	22
Cultural events/receptions	7	4

*Note: The Research Officer was on educational leave between September 1, 1987, and March 31, 1988.

FIELD SERVICES

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has three regional offices. The office located in Digby serves the counties of Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby, Annapolis, and Kings. The New Glasgow office serves the counties of Colchester, Cumberland, Pictou, Guysborough, and Antigonish, although formal complaints are investigated by staff of the Central Office. The Sydney office serves all of Cape Breton.

Staff at these offices carry out the same functions as those provided at the Commission's Central Office.